

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

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WWW.ALMANACNEWS.COM

Menlo School's new flag football players are revved up to take the field

Having former 49ers like Steve Young coaching the team's inaugural season doesn't hurt, either

By Neil Gonzales

Menlo School's Knights all gathered in a big huddle on the sideline of their home field in Atherton, revving up for a flag-football doubleheader on a warm, clear-blue Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 3.

The rallying cry of "Let's get fired up!" rose from the circle. They sure did. The Knights played red-hot, walloping their counterparts from Skyline High in Oakland 34-0 in the first game and handling business in the second with a 21-2 victory. The Knights had a four-game win streak going after narrowly dropping the season opener last month.

But to the players, coaches and parents involved, this inaugural season of high school girls' flag football goes way beyond wins and losses. It has brought a fast-growing opportunity for girls to play competitive football

that was not available or even thought about in the past.

For the Menlo girls in particular, it has also given them the chance to learn the sport from one of the all-time best — National Football League (NFL) Hall of Famer and San Francisco 49er legend Steve Young, who serves as an assistant coach on the team.

"I'm not sure that we can underestimate the significance of the girls being able to play football," said Young, whose two daughters, Summer and Laila, play for the Knights. "I was shocked the first time I came out to practice. The girls were so, so excited but not excited in a birthday party kind of way. They're excited in a more fundamental way like, 'I'm part of something that I've always watched, and now I can be a part of, I can be involved in.'"

See **FLAG FOOTBALL**, page 14



Magali Gauthier

Menlo School sophomore Krista Arreola sprints to score while holding the ball before realizing her flags have been pulled off during a home flag football game against Skyline High School at Wunderlich Field in Atherton on Oct. 3.

Peninsula cities grapple with online trolling while trying to preserve free speech at meetings

Atherton and Redwood City are changing online public comment rules to deal with extremist 'Zoom bombing'

By Neil Gonzales

A lewd, antisemitic profile image popped up on the Zoom screen during the Atherton Town Council meeting Sept. 20. A few seconds passed before the offensive graphic was noticed and taken down.

But then, call after call came in, laced with racist or homophobic remarks. One caller dropped the N-word, and some blasted out profanities.

Similar hate-laden speech via Zoom jolted recent city council and other public meetings

in Redwood City, San Carlos, Pacifica and elsewhere.

The spate of so-called Zoom bombings — part of a nationwide trolling campaign by extremists — has local municipalities wrangling with how to counter the derogatory disruptions while still allowing public comments and freedom of expression as protected by state and federal laws.

Atherton, for instance, plans to tighten up Zoom participation, but Redwood City has decided to suspend taking virtual real-time comments.

"Yes, we are taking numerous

steps toward meeting management to mitigate what happened," Atherton City Manager George Rodericks told The Almanac in an email. "We do have to provide an opportunity for public comment, but we can manage how we provide it."

Zoom participants at an Atherton meeting will no longer be able "to unmute themselves, share screens or independently change their login name," Rodericks said. "All participants joining the meeting will be automatically muted."

Other safeguards are disabling the chat feature and not

allowing participants to go directly into the main-meeting discussion, he said.

He noted that at the last meeting, the council ended taking public comments through Zoom earlier than expected because of all the insensitive remarks coming in and required those who still wanted to address the town to email their thoughts to the clerk. The council could do that again if the Zoom attacks continue.

"We retain the option to remove participants or suspend them," Rodericks added.

Atherton is also collaborating

with other jurisdictions to put together best practices that address Zoom bombing, he said.

For now, Redwood City is dispensing with Zoom comments all together. The community will still be able to view and hear council meetings on Zoom but not be allowed to comment through the video-conferencing platform. Instead, the city will take comments in person during meetings or by email.

If the email comment is sent by 5 p.m. on the day of the meeting, pertains to an agenda item

See **TROLLING**, page 18

INSIDE

ARTSCENE 20 | FOOD & DRINK 22

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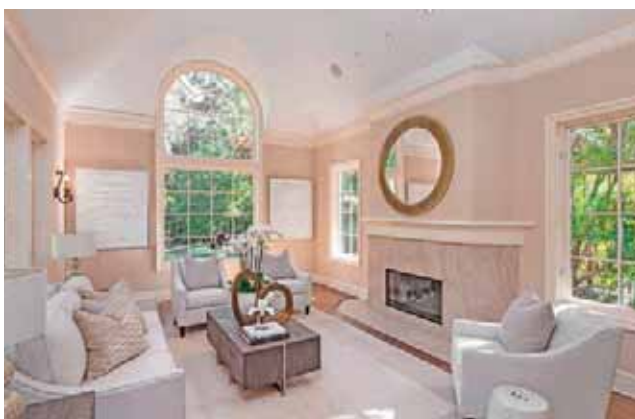
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Devin Roberts

Played with a paddle and a plastic ball with holes, pickleball combines elements of tennis, badminton and pingpong.

As demand for pickleball grows, where will Menlo Park put the courts?

Menlo Park commission explores how to expand pickleball access while preserving tennis and basketball courts

By Neil Gonzales

Pickleball and tennis players alike are calling for fair playing time and space in Menlo Park as the city looks to build upon an existing program for the popular paddle sport.

A similar, sometimes-contentious scene has been playing out across the Peninsula with cities trying to respond to the demand to accommodate pickleball, which has become America's fastest-growing sport but often takes

over tennis courts.

On Wednesday night, Sept. 27, the Menlo Park Parks and Recreation Commission studied various development options and timelines for the future of the city's pickleball offerings. The commission also fielded plenty of thoughts and concerns from pickleball and tennis enthusiasts, many of whom enjoy both sports.

"I've been playing tennis for about 45 years and pickleball for about four years," Jim Carson said, addressing the commission. "So I get both

sides and absolutely agree we need to hang on to both."

But Carson contended that because of pickleball's rapid rise Menlo Park has to act sooner than later on proposals that address the growth.

So while the city should support both pickleball and tennis, he said, it needs "to up the priority (and) lessen the time period for those proposals and get some action done."

While he loves playing tennis, David Bingham told

See **PICKLEBALL**, page 11

Students dislike it, but teachers say de-tracking classes is working

Sequoia Union report shows more students taking advanced classes

By Sue Dremann

Eliminating honors classes in ninth grade isn't hurting high achievers, and it may be helping other students to succeed at college-acceptance-level courses, a Sequoia Union High School District report has found.

The so-called blended or "heterogeneous" classes lump students together in one classroom rather than having a two-tiered system of instruction that separates intellectual elites. The goal was to boost the grades and opportunities for less-advantaged students under the theory that all students working together would improve equity, cooperation and participation, thus improving student outcomes.

The program, which includes English language arts, mathematics and science classes and is aimed at fostering equity, has improved outcomes for students at all levels in the classroom without decreasing rigor for the "high fliers." And while many students previously assigned to classes that didn't get them near the college track are now succeeding, not all students and parents approve of the idea.

During the Sept. 20 study session meeting, many students and parents spoke against the program in a three-hour public comment session urging the district's Board of Trustees to return to the old double-track classes.

The single-track classrooms discriminate against the more

advanced students by holding them back, honors-class proponents claimed. The merged classes prevent the students from being further prepared for the advanced placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program classes, they said.

The district's report, titled "Streamlining Course Offerings and Creating More Diverse Learning Environments to Increase Student Access and Success," found that merging students into the same classes has increased the number of students overall who not only passed classes needed for college acceptance, but they later entered advanced-placement levels in some subjects. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students also improved significantly in some of the streamlined classes.

Diana Wilmot, director of program evaluation and research, acknowledged the study's limitations. Given just six weeks to complete the report, the study focused on student academic achievement in course enrollment, grades and test scores contributing to college entrance and high school graduation requirements. The study ignored other factors, such as socioeconomic status, prior academic achievement and the learning environment, she noted, adding that with academic rigor, the study could have taken many months to complete.

See **SEQUOIA SCORES**, page 15

Five home burglaries reported in Woodside, Portola Valley last Thursday

San Mateo County Sheriff's office asks residents to report suspicious activity

By Andrea Gemmet

San Mateo County Sheriff's deputies said they responded to five calls reporting residential burglaries in Portola Valley and Woodside in just one day. They are asking residents to report any suspicious activity they see.

One of the burglary victims

was at home at the time and confronted the burglars, but was not harmed, according to a news release from the sheriff's office on Thursday evening, Sept. 28.

The five calls came in earlier on Thursday. The first burglary reported is believed to have occurred in Portola Valley on Wednesday morning, Sept. 27, between 8:45 a.m. and 9:19

a.m. The other four took place in Woodside last Thursday between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., according to the sheriff's office.

"In one instance, witnesses described three masked men wearing hooded sweatshirts who used force to enter three of the residences," the news release said. The suspects were reportedly seen driving a white or blue

sedan in Wednesday's burglary, and a black sedan on Thursday.

In each burglary, items such as jewelry, credit cards and electronic equipment were taken, according to the sheriff's office.

Detectives are following up on leads, and said it is unknown at this time whether the suspects or vehicles are working in coordination with each other.

For emergency help, call 911. To report suspicious activity or provide information, contact the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office at its non-emergency line, 650-363-4911, extension 1, or via its anonymous tip line at 800-547-2700. ■

Email Editor Andrea Gemmet at agemmet@almanacnews.com.

**WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 23-02**

At its regular meeting on September 26, 2023, the Woodside Fire Protection District Board of Directors adopted the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA DECLARING CERTAIN VEGETATION AND WASTE MATTER A PUBLIC NUISANCE, PROVIDING FOR THE ABATEMENT AND/OR REMOVAL THEREOF, AND DETERMINING THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.

AYES: Directors Matt Miller, Randy Holthaus, and Patrick Cain

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The Ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 23-02.

SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCE: Ordinance 23-02 declares that Hazardous Vegetation, as defined in the Ordinance, is a seasonal and recurring public nuisance and shall be abated to the satisfaction of the Fire Code Official. The Fire Code Official is defined as the Fire Chief or his or her duly authorized representative.

Ordinance 23-02 also declares that Combustible Rubbish, as defined in the Ordinance, is a public nuisance and shall be abated to the satisfaction of the Fire Code Official.

Ordinance 23-02 authorizes the Fire Code Official to abate such nuisances and establishes a procedure for the abatement of such nuisances. It provides for an appeal procedure relating to the abatement of such nuisances.

Ordinance 23-02 also provides a procedure for the recovery of the costs of such abatements, including the placement of the costs for abating the nuisances as special assessments and liens against properties, to be collected in the same manner as County taxes are paid.

CEQA DETERMINATION: The Board of Directors adopted findings that Ordinance 23-02 is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the ordinance.

A FULL AND COMPLETE COPY OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT WWW.WOODSIDEFIRE.ORG AND A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FULL AND COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE AT THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OFFICE, 808 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028.

Run Date: October 6, 2023

**WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 23-01**

At its regular meeting on September 26, 2023, the Woodside Fire Protection District Board of Directors adopted the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION PROGRAM, ESTABLISHING ADMINISTRATIVE FINES, DETERMINING THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, AND REPEALING ORDINANCE 22-01

AYES: Directors Matt Miller, Randy Holthaus, and Patrick Cain

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The Ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 23-01.

SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCE: In November 2022, the Board of Directors approved Ordinance 22-01, which provided a detailed process for the issuing of administrative citations. Ordinance 23-01 proposes an updated procedure, which primarily makes the following substantive revisions to Ordinance 22-01.

a. Ordinance 23-01 expands the amounts of administrative fines that can be imposed, consistent with legal limits. The Ordinance allows for an administrative fine of up to \$1,000 per violation when the violation qualifies as a misdemeanor. That is also consistent with the recently adopted Fire Code Ordinance, which says that violators shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

b. Ordinance 23-01 clarifies by ordinance, the lawful authority of the Fire Code Official to, in addition to issuing administrative citations:

i. Be authorized to issue written orders to correct or eliminate a fire hazard or life hazard, in accordance with Health & Safety Code section 13870.

ii. Be further authorized to issue criminal citations for the misdemeanors specified in Health & Safety Code section 13871, in accordance with Health & Safety Code section 13872.

CEQA DETERMINATION: The Board of Directors adopted findings that Ordinance 23-01 is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the ordinance.

A FULL AND COMPLETE COPY OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT WWW.WOODSIDEFIRE.ORG AND A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FULL AND COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE AT THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OFFICE, 808 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028.

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Established 1965

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CRIME BRIEFS

Multiple indecent exposures lead to man's arrest

Palo Alto police have arrested a man who they said lewdly exposed himself to two women on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 1, including twice while he was getting medical treatment at Stanford Hospital, police said.

The first incident occurred at the bike path that runs along the Caltrain tracks between Embarcadero Road and Encina Avenue, police said in a news release. The victim, a woman in her 20s, told the police that she had been walking on the path when a man came up from behind and grabbed her arm, startling her and prompting her to turn around. Seeing that his pants were down and that his penis was exposed, she yelled, fled and called the police to report what happened.

A few hours later, police received a call reporting another indecent exposure that occurred inside Stanford Hospital at 300 Pasteur Dr., police said. The caller, a woman in her 20s who works in the hospital, reported that a patient who had arrived at the hospital exposed himself to her on two separate occasions while receiving medical treatment, according to the news release.

Police determined that the same man was responsible for both incidents. They arrested a 33-year-old South San Francisco resident for three misdemeanor counts of indecent exposure, police said. He was booked at the Santa Clara County Main Jail.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the department's 24-hour dispatch center at (650) 329-2413, to e-mail an anonymous tip to paloalto@tipnow.org or to send it by text message or voice mail to (650) 383-8984.

—Gennady Sheyner

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Woodside celebrates Day of the Horse

Don't let the name fool you, Woodside's annual Day of the Horse event spans three days, starting with a reception and youth art show Friday evening, Oct. 13. On Saturday, Oct. 14, there's a progressive trail ride from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., followed by an afterparty.

The main event is the family-friendly Horse Fair from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 15, featuring free activities ranging from pony rides and face-painting to live music, crafts and demonstrations celebrating all things equine.

The fair takes place at Woodside Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road. More information is on the Woodside Area Horse Owners (WHOA!) website at whoa94062.org.

—Andrea Gemmet

U.S. 101 northbound closure Oct. 13-16

All northbound lanes on U.S. 101 are scheduled to be closed starting Friday night, Oct. 13, until 5 a.m. Monday, Oct. 16, between Brittan and Whipple avenues in Redwood City for construction on the Cordilleras Creek Bridge, Caltrans announced. This follows the closure of southbound lanes Sept. 29-Oct. 2.

According to Caltrans, the bridge is at the "end of its service life" and will be replaced with a single-span bridge. Residents should avoid the area during the 55-hour closure and use alternate routes. Signs will be set up to direct traffic away from the construction sites.

Menlo Park begins construction on last stage of Middle Avenue bike lanes pilot

The final segment of the Middle Avenue buffered bike lanes pilot project has begun construction in Menlo Park. The construction spans from El Camino Real to University Drive.

The pilot includes buffered bike lanes and the removal of parking spots along Middle Avenue, as well as changes to the frontage of Nealon Park, located at 800 Middle Ave.

—Cameron Rebosio

Governor signs two Berman bills that target greater gun safety

Legislation would expand DOJ's power to conduct inspections, require dealers to distribute information about gun risks

By Gennady Sheyner

Seeking to strengthen California's gun laws, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed, on Sept. 26, a pair of bills authored by Assembly member Marc Berman, D-Menlo Park. The bills empower the Department of Justice to conduct firearm inspection and also require firearm sellers to provide information about the risks of gun ownership.

The bills were Berman's response to the January shooting in Half Moon Bay, which claimed the lives of seven people. Berman, who is a founding member of the Legislature's Gun Violence Working Group, said, "The incident rocked (his) district."

"In the aftermath, the message from my constituents was clear: do more to combat gun violence," Berman said in a statement. "We have endured our collective grief and frustration long enough."

Both bills easily sailed through the state Legislature over the past month. AB 1420 advanced with a 75-5 vote in the Assembly and a 33-5 vote in the state Senate,



Marc Berman

while AB 1598 moved ahead with votes of 63-13 in the Assembly and 30-5 in the Senate.

AB 1420 came out of a partnership between Berman and the state Department of Justice, which sponsored the bill. The law authorizes the DOJ to conduct firearm dealer inspection and requires it to maintain information about firearm dealers who were found to have violated state gun statutes. It also expands the department's authority to assess civil fines against firearm dealers.

While the DOJ already has the authority to conduct spot checks of firearms dealers, this power is limited to checking for

compliance with specific statutes that are listed in a section of a penal code that has not been updated since 2010, according to the Assembly bill analysis. The analysis notes that DOJ representatives who conduct inspections "often observe non-compliance with more recent laws, but do not have the authority to cite for those violations."

State Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement that the bill will expand the DOJ's ability to conduct inspections and "ensure dealers are following California's gun laws."

"California has some of the strongest gun safety laws in the nation — and these laws save lives," Bonta said. "AB 1420 provides the California DOJ with the necessary authority and tools to hold accountable gun dealers who transfer, sell, or store firearms in violation of these laws."

"I thank Assembly member Marc Berman and our state leaders for advancing AB 1420 to help ensure that law enforcement has the tools we need to enforce California's common-sense gun laws and keep our communities safe."

Berman said in a statement that bad actor gun shops are currently skirting California's laws. AB 1420, he said, will crack down on these businesses.

His other bill, AB 1598, targets education rather than enforcement. It requires the Department of Justice to put together a firearm-safety-certificate study guide and a pamphlet on the risks and benefits of firearm ownership. Starting Jan. 1, 2025, firearms dealers will be required to provide the most recent copy of the pamphlet to anyone buying or being loaned a firearm.

In explaining the bill, Berman cited a statistic from the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which reported that the presence of a gun in the household increases the risk of homicide for women by 500%. The bill, he said, will "ensure that Californians are fully informed of the risk of gun ownership before they buy a gun."

"Many people buy firearms because they think it will make them safer at home. The evidence is indisputable, however: keeping a firearm in your home dramatically increases the likelihood

that you or someone you love will be a victim of gun violence," Berman said in a statement. "The data clearly shows that having a firearm at home increases the risk of death or serious injury by suicide, homicide, or unintentional injury."

Both bills advanced with no formal opposition. Dr. Raul Ayala, president of the California Academy of Family Physicians, said in a statement that physicians have long recognized gun violence as a "national public health epidemic."

"We care for victims of gun violence every day," Ayala said. "Gun violence is a physical and psychological trauma that affects the health of our patients, families, and communities."

"AB 1598 is part of a needed comprehensive public health approach to address the gun violence epidemic by requiring education and demonstrated knowledge about the responsibilities of gun ownership and operation." ■

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Menlo Park council hands out \$4.2 million to help build affordable housing projects

By Cameron Rebosio

Thanks in part to money from Menlo Park's \$4.3 million below-market rate housing fund, 88 affordable homes are on track to be built, including 66 at in the big, recently approved development at 123 Independence Drive.

"This morning between 4 and 5 a.m. 120,000 people got out of their beds in their homes up and down the Central Valley and drove ... into the Bay Area to their jobs here," Matt Regan, senior vice president of government relations for the Bay Area Council, said at a Sept. 26 Menlo Park City Council meeting about the lack of affordable housing. "And that is because we, as a region, have failed."

The Sobrato Organization's 432-unit, 67-foot-tall housing development in the Bayfront neighborhood, 123 Independence Drive, calls for 116, three-story townhomes and 316 apartments in a five-story multifamily complex. Of these, 66 units are reserved for below-market-rate housing, 18 which Menlo Park is helping finance through the city's BMR housing fund. The City Council unanimously approved the BMR housing agreements and a tentative project map at the Sept. 26 meeting.

The project also includes 586 parking spaces and nearly 50,000 square feet of publicly accessible open space. According to a presentation by the Sobrato Organization, the

property will include a neighborhood park with bike and pedestrian pathways.

"This project will be critical in supporting Menlo Park's RHNA targets, and will make a significant impact to mitigate the housing crisis," said Ali Sapirman, South Bay organizer for the Housing Action Coalition, referring to the number of units the city must plan for in the next eight-year housing element cycle. "Sobrato has gone above and beyond in their commitments to new affordable homes, above the mandated requirements. When you see a developer go above and beyond mandates, that is a clear indicator that they are committed to positive outcomes for the community."

Habitat for Humanity is responsible for the affordable units on the site, a nonprofit working to provide affordable home ownership. The organization caps housing costs at 30% of income. While Habitat for Humanity normally serves households earning between 50-100% of the

area median income (AMI), for 123 Independence Drive they chose to serve making up to 80% AMI. The organization requires those purchasing affordable units to take courses in financial literacy. Only those on the property's title need to be first-generation homeowners, as opposed to Menlo Park's BMR guidelines that state all residents of the home must be first-time homeowners.

Additional affordable housing funding

The City Council also approved a total of \$4.18 million for three affordable housing projects from Belle Haven at the Sept. 26 meeting.

The city released a notice of funding availability on Dec. 23 for affordable housing, allowing developers to apply for the funds. The Housing Commission recommended approving three of four applications.

The one application that didn't make the cut was submitted by HIP Housing, which sought \$11.3 million for nine

low-income units. Staff said that the decision did not rule out HIP Housing from future funding, but its project was not chosen due to its high cost. HIP Housing planned to contribute to the project through land donation, and requested \$1.2 million per unit, which comprised almost all of the project's cost.

Three applications were approved, including one from Habitat for Humanity requesting \$2 million for 18 low-income homes in the 123 Independence Drive project, one from MidPen Housing for \$2 million for 62 extremely and very-low income units for veterans at 795 Willow Road, and a request for \$180,000 from Rebuilding Together to rehabilitate eight units in the Belle Haven neighborhood.

The council unanimously voted to approve the three applications recommended by the Housing Commission. ■

*Email Staff Writer
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Local FBI office warns public against 'phantom hacker' scam

By Gabe Agcailli

The FBI's San Francisco office warned the public on Tuesday, Oct. 3, against a new scam called "The Phantom Hacker" that targets older adults.

In the new scam, swindlers pretend to be tech support staff, bank employees and government officials and contact older adults to deceive them into thinking that foreign hackers have infiltrated their financial account, the FBI said in an advisory.

Federal agents said the scam works in three steps. First, a scammer posing as a customer

support representative from a legitimate tech company reaches out to a victim through a phone call, text, email, or a popup window on their computer and gives instructions to call a number for "assistance."

Once the victim calls the phone number, scammers tell the victim to download a software program, which gives them remote access to the victim's computer. Scammers pretend to run a virus scan on the victim's computer and falsely claim the computer either was or is at risk of being hacked.

Scammers then tell the victim

to open their bank accounts to determine if there have been any unauthorized charges, deceiving victims to reveal which account can be targeted. Then, they tell the victim that they will receive a call from their financial institution's fraud department with further instructions.

Scammers posing as representatives of the mentioned financial institution then contact the victim and falsely inform them their computer and bank accounts were accessed by a foreign hacker and the victim must move their money to a "safe" third-party account, such as an account with the Federal Reserve or another U.S. government agency.

Victims are then told to transfer their money via a wire transfer, cash, or wire conversion to cryptocurrency, often directly to overseas recipients. The victim is told not to inform anyone of the real reason for the transactions. Transfers to the scammers take over a span of days or months, according to the FBI.

Victims may be also contacted by scammers posing as representatives from the Federal Reserve or another U.S. government agency. To assure suspicious

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

June Jensen, 99, a Menlo Park resident and journalist who was once one of the few female city editors at a daily newspaper, met her husband, a longtime San Mateo County coroner, in jail while doing interviews about an arson case, and was one of the organizers of the San Mateo County Council of Democratic Clubs and the Menlo Park Democratic

Club, on Sept. 4.

Marc Gambit Toney, 28, a San Francisco resident who grew up in Mountain View, set the school record in pole vault at University of California at Davis, worked as an account executive at Salesforce and loved books, on Sept. 14.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at AlmanacNews.com/obituaries. ■

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Sequoia district didn't know of ex-superintendent's involvement in LA overtime-pay scandal

Allegations surfaced regarding more than \$78,000 in improperly authorized payments to Darnise Williams while at Los Angeles Unified School District

By Sue Dremann

Darnise Williams, Sequoia Union High School District's former superintendent, was implicated in a pay scandal in the Los Angeles Unified School District prior to being hired by Sequoia, a recent Los Angeles Times story has revealed.

Williams, a popular superintendent who left her position at Sequoia less than two years into her three-year contract under undisclosed circumstances, was one of a number of Los Angeles school district employees who allegedly took thousands of dollars in overtime pay that wasn't properly authorized, according to court and district documents obtained by the LA Times.

At the time, Williams worked for the Los Angeles school district in then-Superintendent Austin Beutner's cabinet as senior director, a position she held for a year. Prior to her cabinet position, she was administrator of instruction in LAUSD's

Local District West. She was demoted for her part in the scandal in July 2020 after filing for and receiving three years' worth of extra pay totaling \$78,051.

In all, a handful of upper-tier staff collected \$750,000 during a three-year period starting in 2017. Overtime pay above salaries is granted in the LA school district only in rare, emergency situations, according to administrators cited in the LA Times story. Staff who submitted for the pay didn't follow district rules when applying for overtime compensation and did so repeatedly. Other administrators then improperly approved the pay, according to the LA Times.

"The extra pay coincided with the run-up to the teachers' strike of January 2019, when district officials stressed that the school system was operating as efficiently as it could and struggling to provide basic services to students — leaving it unable to afford raises sought by teachers

and low-paid nonteaching staff," the article noted.

The scandal came to light in court documents filed by a former employee who was suing for harassment.

In an email on Sept. 28, a Los Angeles Unified spokesperson said: "In 2020 and under a former superintendent, the District was made aware of allegations of potential violations of district policy related to additional work compensation. After a full investigation, it was determined there were no violations of law, and the District took the necessary steps and approach. Given the gravity of these allegations and the responsibility to ensure all guidelines and procedures are adhered to, this administration is conducting a full review and reserves the right to take appropriate action as necessary."

The emailed statement added that all personnel matters are private and confidential, so district officials cannot comment on why an employee transitioned to other positions within

Los Angeles Unified.

Williams did not respond to requests for comment.

Sequoia Union High School District said in a statement that the district was not aware of any of the claims referenced in the Los Angeles Times article during Dr. Williams' hiring process and that it is not conducting an investigation at this time.

"As Superintendent, Dr. Williams was only entitled to pay as per the terms of her contract. Dr. Williams' contract did not include overtime pay. All purchases and reimbursements made by the Superintendent's office were reconciled according to District procedure," Sequoia Union said.

Williams's departure in mid-December 2022 from Sequoia set off a firestorm in the school community. She was the district's first Black female superintendent, a hire that was widely lauded by the community. Many felt she was pushed out by the board, which said the decision was by mutual agreement.

Others decried the decision as racist.

Details were never revealed as to why Williams resigned. She was subsequently hired as superintendent by the Pacifica School District and began there on July 1.

Pacifica School Board President Lynda Brocchini, in an email on Thursday, Sept. 28, said that the board underwent an extensive background check of Williams prior to hiring her, which included conversations with her previous employers. "I can confirm that LA Unified was one of those districts," she said.

"After those conversations, the Board of Trustees was satisfied with the results of the vetting process and determined that Dr. Williams was the best candidate to serve as the superintendent of the Pacifica School District," said Brocchini. ■

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.



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PICKLEBALL

continued from page 5

commissioners, he does like pickleball. “I think that we can accommodate both the tennis and the pickleball players by building more pickleball courts,” Bingham said. “And I think it would be really tragic to sacrifice more tennis courts to accommodate the pickleball players,” particularly given that many of them come from other cities.

Pickleball is a paddle game that combines tennis, badminton and ping-pong. Multiple pickleball courts can be superimposed onto one tennis court.

Currently, Menlo Park has eight pickleball courts — four at Nealon Park on Middle Avenue and four at Kelly Park in Belle Haven. Added striping and different netting on two tennis courts — one at Nealon and another at Kelly — allow for pickleball play.

Among the proposals that the commission is studying is permanently converting the tennis court at Nealon or Kelly for pickleball. In a report to the commission, city staff marked this option as potentially a high priority with a possible timeframe of three to 12 months.

A high-priority but longer-term option would be to construct two new, dedicated pickleball courts at Willow Oaks Park. This approach, possibly taking 12 to 36 months, “would increase the city’s total number of pickleball courts without decreasing or reducing other existing tennis or basketball courts and would provide the opportunity to design courts specifically for pickleball,” staff said in the report.

Lower-priority alternatives are converting the outdoor basketball court at Burgess Park to up to three pickleball areas and creating additional space for the paddle sport at Nealon, staff said.

The commission also needs to consider varying issues accompanying the proposals, from having to install noise-dampening material around pickleball courts to cross-promoting the sport with other amenities as a way to boost the underutilized court at Kelly Park, staff said.

Commissioners appeared to favor the proposal making the pickleball courts at Kelly Park permanent. This option could entail removing the tennis configuration there and updating the striping exclusively for pickleball.

Upgrading the pickleball courts at Kelly should attract people who don’t play there now, Commissioner Wonman Lee said.

Noting that Kelly Park, located at 100 Terminal Ave., is near U.S. Highway 101, Lee said the noise from increased pickleball activity shouldn’t make a difference.



Devin Roberts

Denny Hsu (right) hits a pickleball during play with Winston Chen in Foster City.

“You can make all the noise you want and it won’t affect anybody,” he said.

Commissioner Kelsey Theriault agreed, saying, “There really isn’t a noise burden on the community” in establishing a pickleball site at Kelly.

In contrast, commissioners were wary of adding more pickleball courts at Nealon Park, located at 800 Middle Ave. and surrounded by homes.

“One thing I’ve heard is that pickleball’s a community sport or fosters a community,” Lee said. “So if we were to expand courts on Nealon, I’m afraid that more

people would go to Nealon and play, and then there’ll be more people waiting. There’ll be more noise. So I don’t really think that’s an option given how Nealon is located.”

Commissioner Jessica Gilmartin expressed strong reservations about the option to turn the basketball court at Burgess into a pickleball site. “That basketball court is always used,” Gilmartin said. “It is used all the time, and it’s used by kids and teenagers. Anything that removes athletics for kids and teenagers, I would have a hard time supporting that.”

Cyrena Nelson Wilson

February 10, 1921 – August 10, 2023

Cyrena Nelson Wilson was born to Jesse Ward Nelson and Natalia Carson Nelson in Chicago, IL on February 10, 1921, and died on August 10, 2023 at her home in Menlo Park. Cyrena grew up on the North Shore and went to New Trier High School and then to Scripps College in Claremont, CA, graduating in 1944. Also in 1944 she married William Bonner. After the birth of their first of four children, they moved to California.



In 1961, Cyrena was divorced and remarried Arthur Jeffery Wilson who also had four children from his previous marriage. Cyrena was deeply artistic, excelling in multiple mediums. She taught in Palo Alto elementary schools for many years. After retiring, Cyrena suffered a spontaneous spinal cord injury, causing paraplegia. But she maintained remarkable strength and ability through the last three decades of her 102 years. Jeff passed away in 2010 and Cyrena lived out her remaining years at home with the help of family and outstanding caregivers. Cyrena is survived by four children, Nelson, Dwarka, Jay and Terra, three stepchildren, Andrea, Polly and Glen, and by many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A memorial will be held on Saturday, November 18 at 2:30 p.m. at Ladera Community Church.

PAID OBITUARY

A related consideration before the commission involves a court-user fee. Currently, the city charges for a key to access a tennis court. The fee generates about \$40,000 in cost-recovery revenue every year, according to staff. At this time, however, no key or fee is required to access a pickleball court.

The city could continue the current fee structure, staff said, or give residents a key for free while still charging non-residents. Another scenario could be to levy the fee for some courts but not others. Or the city could just open all the courts for free.

The commission’s study session was part of a process to incorporate pickleball into the city’s Parks and Recreation master plan and review potential fee changes.

Feedback during the session will help staff draft revisions to the master plan and fee structure.

Staff is expected to have the proposed revisions ready on Nov. 15 for the commission to

look over before possibly sending them to the City Council for approval.

The town of Atherton is exploring a pilot program with two pickleball courts striped over an existing tennis configuration at Holbrook-Palmer Park. Part of that effort was studying the pickleball program offered to members of the private Menlo Circus Club. Atherton is also checking if it could borrow baffling material that the club is no longer using for its pickleball courts.

San Mateo County plans to build pickleball courts as part of its renovation of Flood Park at 215 Bay Road in Menlo Park and Half Moon Bay, like Menlo Park, is considering expanding its existing pickleball program.

According to the Maryland-based trade organization Sports & Fitness Industry Association in August, pickleball participation nationwide rose by 85.7% year-over-year with 8.9 million players in 2022. ■



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FLAG FOOTBALL

continued from page 1

Knights Head Coach John Paye expressed similar sentiments. “The girls are just super excited about playing,” said Paye, also a former 49er. “They’ve watched football for years. They’ve watched the Menlo football players, the boys, have so much fun, and now they’re finally having fun playing the game.”

Earlier this year, the state athletic governing body California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) approved flag football as an official team sport for high school girls. Schools throughout the state, including scores in the Bay Area, have teams competing this fall.

The CIF approval comes as flag football has experienced soaring popularity among female athletes over recent years. About 474,000 girls between the age of 6 and 17 played flag football last year in the U.S. — a 63% burst from 2019, according to NFL executive Troy Vincent Sr. in a recent story for the Sports Business Journal.

Some 15,700 girls competed in varsity high school flag football in the 2021-22 season — a 40% rise in the span of three years, according to Vincent, also a former star player in the NFL.

Summer Young, a Menlo senior who plays wide receiver, said she is grateful just being able to participate for one season before graduating.

“I think it’s really special,” Summer said of seeing a girl’s flag football program established. “We’ve never had this opportunity. It’s the first year.”

The timing was perfect for Ava Allen, who quarterbacks the Knights.

‘They’ve watched football for years. They’ve watched the Menlo football players, the boys, have so much fun, and now they’re finally having fun playing the game.’

JOHN PAYE, KNIGHTS HEAD COACH

“This couldn’t have worked out better because I’m a freshman, so I get to play all four years,” Ava said. “It’s the most fun I’ve ever had playing a sport.”

Having girls’ flag football also means “growing women’s sports here,” she said. “It’s making sure that there are more opportunities like this for a lot of girls as



Magali Gauthier

Steve Young, former San Francisco 49er and Menlo School’s flag football assistant coach, discusses a play with junior Ellie Knoll, left, and other players during a home game against Skyline High School at Wunderlich Field in Atherton.

they come up through school.”

Competing in the sport is a way to build teamwork and many other skills, she added.

Longtime football fan David Jones said he is thrilled to see his daughter, Kylie, play a sport that he loves and she’s now very much into.

“I grew up with it,” Jones said.

“I’ve always tried to get her to pay attention, but she’s paying a lot more attention now to all things football since she’s playing. And I think that’s part of the fun of it: You get kids on the field, and they start to really appreciate the game and they’re having a blast.”

Despite the lopsided losses for his team at the Oct. 3 game against Menlo, Skyline Head Coach Jonathan Carroll thought the whole flag-football experience for his players has been invaluable.

“It’s so awesome for them to be able to be on the same field as NFL great Steve Young,” Carroll said, adding, “They’re still learning the game, but it’s cool to watch them. They’re great listeners. Most of our girls play other sports, so I think that football gives you maybe a little grit for other sports, definitely some conditioning and maybe a better appreciation for the game when we watch the boys’ games.”

Compared to tackle football,

the flag version fields seven players for each team, instead of 11. The field of play is also smaller — 80 yards long versus the standard 100. Ripping off a flag around a ball carrier’s waist instead of tackling means the end of a play.

There might be no tackling, but the game Tuesday between Menlo and Skyline showed that flag football is far from genteel. It had plenty of energy and contact with players running full speed, crashing into each other or falling on the turf trying to make a play.

In one thrilling play, Ava took a three-step drop and flung the football about 30 yards downfield to fellow freshman Laila. The ball just cleared the outstretched hand of a defender but bounced off Laila. The ball wobbled forward and a bit sideways, dropping quickly toward the ground. And then, Laila clutched it knee-high.

She sprinted toward the end zone to the loud, exhilarated cheers of her teammates. ■



Magali Gauthier

Players on Menlo School’s flag football team huddle before a home game against Skyline High School at Wunderlich Field.

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SEQUOIA SCORES

continued from page 5

During the Sept. 20 school district board meeting, public speakers commented for nearly three hours about the pros and cons of continuing the merged classes.

"I think that AP classes should be brought back because many students are passionate about certain areas. Whether it's physics, math, English, science, they should have the opportunity to learn content that they are actually appropriately challenged for," a middle school student named Yoshi said.

Sushant, a senior in the district, said having honors courses early in high school is a vital step for preparation for college readiness and advanced classes later in high school.

"I've learned a myriad of indispensable skills from my advanced classes, such as analytical skills and critical thinking, and these are essential for college readiness," Sushant said. "The focus should not simply be on test scores and grades because college readiness and learning are not always reflected in these metrics. I've seen countless examples where the grades between classes are the same, but the work that it took to get there was different."

Candace Bolles, a history teacher at Menlo-Atherton High School with 20 years of educational experience, addressed concerns raised by the parent group Students First, which sent a letter to the trustees.

Contrary to their claim that merged classes harm students, Bolles stated that after the 2021-22 shift from tracked to detracked ninth-grade ethnic studies, the number of 10th graders in AP History doubled, with pass rates climbing to 98% for the AP World exam, Bolles said.

"Not only has the pass rate increased, (but) the distribution of scores has changed. More students than ever are scoring a four or a five on the AP exam. Last year, 60% of students scored a five on the AP World exam. It's clear that de-tracking the ninth-grade history courses has not harmed students but, in fact, has contributed to their academic advancement," she added.

Rachel Richards, a biology and chemistry teacher at M-A, said she was initially apprehensive about teaching a blended course. She thought she would have to "dumb down" the curriculum. But her sentiments have changed 180 degrees, she said.

"I have watched students of all levels thrive in our blended classes. I think those who are opposed are afraid that opportunities for students are being removed," Richards said. "This is a grave

misconception. Instead, we are providing enriched opportunities for everyone in our blended courses.

"I teach the same rigorous curriculum to my students now as I did in my AS classes. The labs are the same; the subject matter is the same," she said.

The science standards have changed to allow students to access curricula from multiple points, such as designing an experiment, which allows advanced students to stretch while average students can still thrive in more tailored experiments, she said.

Sequoia Union High School District initially merged math classes in response to low algebra scores among certain groups of students on the California State Dashboard Indicators.

The district developed a pilot program placing students in University of California A-G math courses - ones that are mandatory for UC and California State University admissions.

Students were enrolled in combined science classes meeting UC standards.

The district streamlined language arts and some math and science course offerings for students by eliminating remedial courses and merging introductory "advanced" and "grade level" courses to promote classroom diversity, which would allow underserved students to access A-G coursework and demonstrate their ability to graduate and meet the University of California and California State University admissions requirements, according to the district.

The district said the move would improve outcomes for students not initially on the "advanced track," opening up access to advanced courses such as AP or IB courses during their upperclassmen years. The change would maintain or increase high AP or IB course enrollments and test-pass rates for students who traditionally have started high school in the "advanced track," the district said.

The classes had higher expectations and more specific teaching experiences for the different student needs. They were designed to create a greater sense of belonging for the students in more diverse classrooms, according to the report.

Teachers across the district have endorsed the benefits of these changes. The highest-achieving students' performance also remained strong. According to the staff report, teachers reported better learning environments for all, as students had more opportunities to get to know each other.

The report looked at English language arts, science and mathematics students on the

district level and within four high schools, including Sequoia, Menlo-Atherton, Woodside and Carlmont.

Specifically, Sequoia High has seen an uptick in students taking IB English, with a notable 90% now meeting UC A-G requirements. There was no growth in the number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students taking the IB class. The number of students who took IB English in their junior year increased from 167 for the class of 2017 to 228 for the class of 2024.

At Menlo-Atherton, the numbers were more significant for the more disadvantaged students. The study showed that the number of these students achieving a GPA of 3.5 or above tripled, with many more earning A grades. Menlo-Atherton disadvantaged students who enrolled in any variety of chemistry classes increased from 40 students from the class of 2017 to 157 from the class of 2023 — a nearly 300% increase, the study found.

Meanwhile, Sequoia's chemistry program, dominated by non-disadvantaged students, still shows overall benefits from the merged structure and the merged classes didn't negatively impact the "high-fliers," as more students received A grades, the study showed.

While the number of students who took AP Physics increased overall, disadvantaged chemistry students did not enroll in the AP Physics class in their junior year. Eleven students in the class of 2022 received top grades of four or five; that number rose to 36 in the class of 2023, and so far, for the class of 2024, 48% of students have received the highest grades. A full 81% of students in the AP Physics achieved passing grades, Wilmot said.

At Carlmont High, chemistry enrollments are lower, but top-grade students have increased, Principal Gay Buckland Murray said.

Districtwide, more socioeconomically disadvantaged first-year students are enrolling in

above-grade-level math who are in the class of 2026, the report found. The number of disadvantaged students who achieved the UC algebra requirement (the "C" level out of the A-G requirements) rose from 212 among the class of 2017 to 368 among the class of 2026, a 74% increase, according to the report. Non-socioeconomically disadvantaged students met the requirement 80% of the time with a pass rate of more than 90%.

More students were also meeting the science requirements for UC and CSU, including a positive change for socioeconomically disadvantaged students after merging classes. Still, the numbers didn't translate into more of those students opting for the college-preparatory AP Biology class in the upper grades, the study found.

Mostly non-socioeconomically disadvantaged students participated in AP Biology, with the number of students increasing from 39 to 87 in two years. The number of juniors and seniors enrolling in AP/IB Biology courses more than doubled from 142 among the class of 2017 to 362 among the class of 2023, the report found.

Although no votes were taken during the study session, SUHSD trustees weighed in with their views.

Jacob Yuryov, one of two student trustees, said he spent the past couple of weeks discussing the merged classes with "every single student I can get my hands on," including students at other schools.

"Everywhere, I asked them what they thought ... Their response was almost unanimous. Almost every single student that I talked to gave me a resounding 'yes,' and explicitly stated their desire for the return of honors courses that have been taken away and explicitly stated their desire for the board not to take away any more courses," Yuryov said, adding that his conversations included

students who were not enrolled in advanced classes.

But some district teachers noted that preparation and the desire for a prestigious "honors" label during early high school years are not the same. The blended classes foster critical thinking skills and appreciation for different perspectives, which has been crucial to the growth of all students. Taking away the honors classes didn't change access to college-preparatory AP and IB classes, which might give a leg up to students going to college, they said.

Board trustee Sathvik Nori said it's still concerning that there wasn't an increase in underrepresented minorities taking higher-level AP courses. He quoted from an article he wrote when he was a senior in the school district.

"The problem of underrepresented minorities not taking honors classes is not something that is unique to the English department or even M-A for that regard. But if we continue to eliminate honors classes rather than addressing the root of the issue, we are doing a disservice to all students. Yes, there are inequities in the educational opportunities that students have across our district, especially in their feeder middle schools. But more worryingly, there's a culture that sees honors and AP classes as only for white and Asian students. If we look at any AP Chemistry, AP European History ... AP Calculus or AP Physics class, you will see a demographic no different than that of formerly (what was) English 1. If anything, it is worse."

That institutionalized perspective that only a specific type of people are meant to take honors and AP courses must be deconstructed, Nori said.

"Because if we do not solve that problem, we will never solve the achievement gap," he added. ■

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Local leaders share thoughts on Sen. Dianne Feinstein's 'trailblazing' leadership

By Embarcadero Media Staff / Bay City News

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the longest-serving woman senator in the country's history and the first woman to be San Francisco's mayor, has died at the age of 90, her office confirmed Friday, Sept. 29.

"Senator Feinstein never backed away from a fight for what was just and right. At the same time, she was always willing to work with anyone, even those she disagreed with, if it meant bettering the lives of Californians or the betterment

of our nation," James Sauls, Feinstein's chief of staff, said in a statement.

Feinstein, who was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992, was a trailblazing politician — the first woman to be president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors who became mayor in 1978 after the assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

The senator's legacy of legislation included the enactment of a federal assault weapons ban in 1994, the creation of the nationwide Amber Alert network for missing children, and the release

of a report into the CIA's detention and interrogation practices that led to the passage of laws to ensure that some post-Sept. 11 interrogation methods would never be used again.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, himself a former San Francisco mayor, was among the local politicians to issue statements last Friday morning mourning Feinstein's death.

"Dianne Feinstein was many things — a powerful, trailblazing U.S. Senator; an early voice for gun control; a leader in times of tragedy and chaos. But to me, she was a dear friend, a lifelong mentor, and a role model not only for me, but to my wife and daughters for what a powerful, effective leader looks like," Newsom wrote.

Other local public officials issued statements in reaction to Feinstein's death.

U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, said Feinstein "stood as tall as our redwoods in representing the nation-state of California that she so loved."

"California has lost its great Senator, a woman of many firsts and a woman of enormous integrity. Dianne Feinstein was a courageous leader, going up against the NRA to ban assault weapons, a defender of LGBTQ rights, a voice against torture,



Greg Nash/Pool Photo via AP

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat from California, speaks during a hearing at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on March 3, 2021.

and a mentor to countless women," Eshoo said in a statement.

"Senator Feinstein was a trailblazer for women in politics (and an) icon in California who overcame adversity (and) tragedy and dedicated her life to service to others," wrote Assembly member Marc Berman in a statement on X, the social media site formerly known as Twitter. "Before we speculate about the future, I hope everyone takes the time to honor her remarkable life."

State Sen. Josh Becker also lauded Feinstein for her many years of leadership.

"She entered Congress and went to work on some of the major issues facing our nation, including gun safety and LGBTQ+ rights," Becker said in a statement on X. "She served CA (with) dignity and helped cement CA's influence nationwide. Sen. Feinstein will

be missed."

Assembly member Diane Papan said that Feinstein would leave an "indelible mark on the history of our nation, our state and our region."

"Her legacy is palpably felt in our made and natural environments thanks to her policy achievements and by every woman who has ever run for office due to her shattering of many glass ceilings. She will be greatly missed," she said.

State Sen. Scott Weiner (D-San Francisco) issued the following statement:

"Dianne Feinstein was a true giant. She helped save our city, becoming Mayor after horrific political assassinations (and) leading us during the worst of the HIV/AIDS health disaster. As our Senator, she led on gun safety and so many issues.

"There will never be another Dianne Feinstein," he added. ■

Rita Williams and her cameraman Bill Moore had this t-shirt made up as a prop for a story about Walter Mondale interviewing Dianne Feinstein as the first woman vice presidential candidate. On that day, Mondale picked Geraldine Ferraro over Feinstein, Williams and Moore gave her the shirt after they thought everyone had left the news conference. A newspaper photographer saw them and took this photo that Feinstein signed in 1984.



Contributed photo

Newsom's pick to replace Feinstein: Laphonza Butler

Butler is president of EMILY's List, a political action committee focused on electing pro-choice, Democratic women

By Lynn La / CalMatters

Late Sunday evening, Oct. 1, Gov. Gavin Newsom confirmed that Laphonza Butler, president of EMILY's List — a political action committee focused on electing pro-choice, Democratic women — will replace the late U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein and finish out her term through 2024.

Newsom said in a statement, "An advocate for women and girls, a second-generation fighter for working people, and a trusted adviser to Vice President Harris, Laphonza Butler represents the best of California.... Laphonza will carry the baton left by Senator Feinstein, continue to break glass ceilings, and fight for all Californians in Washington D.C."

As CalMatters' state Capitol reporter Alexei Koseff explains, Butler for many years was

the president of SEIU Local 2015, a union representing long-term caregivers, before becoming a partner in a political consulting firm that counts Newsom among its clients. She later worked in public policy for Airbnb and was a University of California regent.

She will be the first LGBTQ+ person to represent California in the U.S. Senate, giving Newsom — who has appointed the state's first Latino U.S. senator and the first openly gay justice to the California Supreme Court — the opportunity to rack up another "first."

Among those celebrating: Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ+ advocacy group Equality California.

Jodi Hicks, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California: "Laphonza has been an inspiration to so many, including myself, and I am so proud of

our state and our representation right now. She will be an amazing advocate for Californians in the Senate..."

The news that Butler would succeed Feinstein, first reported by Politico, came as Newsom faced intense public pressure to appoint a Black woman to the job. This was, in part, due to his own comments following his 2020 appointment of Alex Padilla to the U.S. Senate after then-Sen. Kamala Harris was elected vice president. Newsom said if he got the chance to name a successor to Feinstein, he would want a Black woman.

But six months later on NBC's "Meet the Press" — amid Feinstein's declining health and decision not to seek reelection — Newsom said if given the opportunity he would make an "interim appointment" to avoid tipping "the balance" of a crowded March primary race. The lineup already includes

three high-profile Democratic candidates: Reps. Adam Schiff of Burbank, Katie Porter of Irvine, and Barbara Lee of Oakland.

The implication that a Black woman should only serve in the Senate in a caretaker capacity led to public outcry from Lee, who is Black, and her supporters. Earlier on Sunday, Oct. 1, the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Steven Horsford, sent a letter to the governor urging him to pick Lee. And a number of Black female California politicians questioned why any Black woman would take the job knowing she had to give it up in little more than a year. A Los Angeles Times column by Erika D. Smith was headlined: "Newsom's cynical pitch: Hey, you there, Black woman. Can you keep Feinstein's seat warm?"

By late Sunday, the governor's



Laphonza Butler

office confirmed to Alexei that his appointee would, in fact, be free to run for a full term; Newsom communications advisor Anthony York said he regretted not clearing up the confusion sooner. No word on whether Butler intends to run — she now lives in Maryland, but a spokesperson for the governor said she owns a home in California and will re-register to vote here before being sworn into the Senate on Monday, Oct. 2. ■

Woodside Musical Theatre channels storybook fun in upcoming production of 'Seussical'

By Kate Daly

Woodside Musical Theatre returns to the stage this month, presenting an adult-like version of "Seussical" that is in keeping with the original Broadway musical written by the Tony Award winning duo Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty.

The cast of 29 actors includes 20 adults, eight teenagers and one child, who are commuting from as far away as Oakland and San Jose to play favorite Dr. Seuss characters such as The Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Mayzie Le Bird, and Jojo.

Running around in what producer Nancy Fitzgerald describes as "super colorful and playful" costumes, the cast will "celebrate the things that are really positive; this show is

about family and acceptance."

"The music is fantastic and fun," she added.

With a few exceptions many newcomers are involved in the production. Director Jeffrey Ramos was in WMT's "Bright Star" last year, and is joined on the production team by another veteran of that show, Brenda Jackson. Don Coluzzi returns as scenic and lighting designer, but Producer Nancy Fitzgerald, Music and Vocal Director Justin Payne and Choreographer Richard Nguyen are all new.

Mark Bowles is taking off his longtime producer hat to just act this time. He's appearing in his 19th show in the role of General Schmitz. John Tondino is playing Vlad and a Who in what marks his 13 WMT production and Samantha Ayoob is back, this time performing as a Bird Girl. Most of the rest of the cast

is making its WMT debut.

The nonprofit started putting on musicals in the 1950s at Woodside School and has recently partnered with the Woodside Community Foundation to raise money to cover the increased costs of mounting live shows.

"Seussical" will take place at Woodside Performing Arts Center, 199 Churchill Ave. in Woodside at 7 p.m., on Friday, Oct. 13, Saturday, Oct. 14 and Thursday, Oct. 19, with 2 p.m. matinees on Sunday, Oct. 15, Saturday, Oct. 21, and Sunday, Oct. 22.

Tickets are available online at woodsidetheatre.com and at the door. Youth tickets are \$30, seniors are \$52 and adults \$57. The audience is encouraged to wear masks to help keep the cast, crew and 15-piece orchestra healthy. ■



Nancy Fitzgerald

Olivia Haas (Cat in the Hat) and Tyler Kawata (Jojo) in Woodside Musical Theatre's production of "Seussical."

Local athletes turn out in droves for Moonlight Run

Annual charity event at Palo Alto Baylands raises money for local nonprofits

By Palo Alto Weekly staff

Back for its 39th year, the Palo Alto Weekly Moonlight Run & Walk drew runners, walkers and canines to the Palo Alto Baylands Friday night, Sept. 29.

With the full moon making only occasional appearances during the cloudy evening, athletes by the hundreds took to the trails for a 5K walk or run, a 10K or the half marathon, striding past wildlife and pickleweed.

The annual event was organized by the Palo Alto Weekly and city of Palo Alto. Medals were awarded to the top three finishers in each run.

Toward the end of the night, as the medal ceremony was getting underway, a runner who was participating in the 10K collapsed on the route and stopped breathing, prompting police and paramedics to respond, according to event organizers. It was unknown Friday night what the status of the individual was, but a police officer reported that he was alive and had regained his pulse and his breathing.

The situation might have been worse if not for quick intervention by alert volunteers who were manning the water station in the middle of the race course. Graham Sine, 16, was stationed in the Baylands when he heard someone say that a man collapsed, Sine told this

publication. He and another volunteer ran to the man, who was placed in the recovery position, with one arm extended and the other arm folded and supporting his head. The man was vomiting and at one point stopped breathing and heart stopped, Sine said.

Sine, a Palo Alto High student, began to perform CPR while someone called 9-1-1. Police arrived several minutes later and used an automatic external defibrillator, Sine said. Paramedics also quickly got to the scene to try to resuscitate the man before transporting him to the hospital. Police said he had regained his pulse.

Sine, who learned first aid training with with Boy Scout Troop 257, said he had also completed a lifeguarding training course just two weeks ago and was able to apply those skills during the medical emergency.

"In training, we basically did this situation over and over again. Lifeguard training is specifically in the water, but chest compressions and AEDs is what we did over and over again in training," Sine said.

The annual race, which raises money for local nonprofits, had more than 2,000 participants in four events: 5K walk, 5K run, 10K run and half marathon. The complete race results can be found at results.changeofpace.com.

Daniel Aminzade finished in first place in the half-marathon,

completing his race in 1:28:59.90.

He was followed 12 seconds later by Ricardo Cardenas, who finished in 1:29:11.79, and Froylan Roldan, who completed the course in 1:31:46.43.

Tiffany Jin took first place out of the female half-marathoners, finishing in 1:38:55.21. Kristin Haskell and Maria Bautista took second and third place, completing the race in 1:48:39.82 and 1:54:07.68, respectively.

In the 10K race, Kaeden Brinkman finished in first place, completing the course in 33:37.72.

Brinkman was followed by Ruben Krueger, who crossed the finish line at 36:36.93, and Dillon Hu, who finished in 37:37.45.

Out of the female 10K runners, Rebecca Tisdale finished first at 43:50.35. Stephanie Loseille took second place, finishing in 44:56.26, and Amanda Mancino took third, completing the race in 45:25.03.

In the men's 5K race, Martin Moshfeghi took first place, finishing in 16:25.18.

Benjamin Huang took second place, completing the course in 17:04.90, just 2 seconds before Paul Leblond, who finished third with a time of 17:07.01.

Out of the female 5K runners, Honey Gholami finished first at 19:44.22. Megan Tarbell followed, completing the race in 21:57.89, and Ethel Yang finished third, completing the course in 23:05.28.

The Moonlight Run & Walk

marks the kick off to the Weekly's 2023 Holiday Fund campaign, which raises support for nonprofits that assist children, families and individuals in need in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Last year, the fund raised and granted \$793,000 to the agencies, with 100% of donations going to the nonprofits and zero going to administrative costs.

This year, the Moonlight Run's lead sponsor was Stanford Health Care. Corporate sponsors were City of Palo Alto, AGILE Physical Therapy, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, DeLeon Realty, Kaiser Permanente, The Six Fifty, Stanford Federal Credit Union, Wealth Architects,

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich and Rosati Foundation, and the Palo Alto Weekly, Palo Alto Online.

As a special surprise for the first-place finisher of the 10K in the 70+ age bracket, a cash prize, the Ramanujam Parthasarathy Running Free Award, was given out, the third distribution of what is now an annual honor. The recipient, Phil Mast, finished with a time of 57:52:33. The award is a donation from a local family in honor and memory of the wife's father, who ran until he was 83 for the joy and freedom it gave him. The Moonlight Run was the sole purpose for his visits to Palo Alto, according to the family. ■



Jamey Padojino

Adults, kids and canines start the 5K walk at the Palo Alto Weekly Moonlight Run on Sept. 29.

Firefighters file lawsuit against NASA, alleging they were pushed out because of age and union activities

Lawsuit describes workplace environment that routinely belittled employees

By Emily Margaretten

After 28 years of service, two firefighters stationed at NASA's Moffett Field in Mountain View filed a discrimination lawsuit against the federal agency and two of its contractors.

Cameron Gazaway and Robert Wilson, the two plaintiffs in the case, allege that NASA and its joint employers — American Paragon Protective Services and Chenega Security and Support Solutions — discriminated against them based on age, race and religion. The lawsuit alleges that the employers wrongfully terminated their contracts after they complained and attempted to unionize, according to documents filed with the U.S. District Court's San Jose Division on Sept. 18.

NASA ended its contracts with Gazaway and Wilson last September, stating that they did not fulfill a new obligation that required battalion chiefs to have an associate degree in fire science. They were informed that without

the degree, they were no longer qualified to do the jobs they had been performing for more than 20 years, said Chambord Benton-Hayes, the attorney representing Gazaway and Wilson.

Given 45 days to meet the new requirement, Gazaway and Wilson contacted two different universities to inquire about the possibility of obtaining the AA degree, but were told it was not possible in the allocated time. NASA denied their requests for an extension and also rejected the universities' certifications stating that their years of training and experience exceeded the AA degree requirements, according to the lawsuit.

A NASA spokesperson said that the agency was aware of the lawsuit, but does not comment on pending litigation.

It was a pretext for firing them, Benton-Hayes said, claiming that the requirement only applied to battalion chiefs at Moffett Field, and not at any other NASA site. It also meant that Gazaway

and Wilson would have more educational training than their direct supervisor, the fire chief, she said.

For Gazaway and Wilson, who are in their mid-50s, they see the lawsuit as a response to years of discrimination by NASA employees, who mocked and belittled them because of their age, they said. Gazaway and Wilson described the annual fitness tests required by NASA as one example of the harassment they endured. The tests subjected them to taunts about their gray hair, stamina and competence.

"Because we cared so much about serving the community, we overlooked it," Wilson said. "But it was very systemic, over time, these little events. And they finally crossed the line when they got rid of us."

Gazaway, who is African American and a Messianic Christian, said he also encountered racism and religious discrimination at NASA. Despite not practicing holiday celebrations, supervisors pressured Gazaway to participate in

company events like Christmas parties and Easter egg hunts. He also regularly endured negative comments about his beard, which is part of his religion, Gazaway said.

Gazaway described another humiliating incident when he was accused of leaving pubic hair in a bathroom sink. He tried to explain that it was hair from his head, but he still was subjected to an investigation and disciplined for it, Gazaway said.

The lawsuit also alleges that Gazaway and Wilson were not fairly compensated for their work. Despite having strong performance evaluations — with Gazaway even featured on the Discovery Channel's show "Myth Busters" as a NASA safety officer — they were not promoted in recent years and had difficulty taking vacation time and sick leave.

To address these issues, Gazaway and Wilson started to form a union. But before it was recognized, they were terminated from their jobs, according to the lawsuit.

"NASA, I believe, took us for granted," Gazaway said. "And we've seen this pattern happen to many other people throughout our careers. At some point, enough is enough. And (we) made the determination to stand up not only for ourselves, but also for those who, for whatever reason, didn't have the strength or energy to fight this fight," he added.

Gazaway and Wilson are asking for compensation for lost wages, emotional distress, punitive damages and the associated costs of their attorney fees.

At the time of their termination, Gazaway and Wilson's salaries were approximately \$190,578 with health benefits of \$13,220, according to the lawsuit.

In 2020, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena settled an age discrimination lawsuit for \$10 million. ■

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at mmargaretten@mvoice.com.

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TROLLING

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or is a general remark on matters under the city's jurisdiction, it will be read out loud.

"Many public agencies in our region have had meetings disrupted with hate speech in recent weeks," Redwood City Mayor Jeff Gee said in a news release. "Vile comments and images were displayed by those participating by Zoom. To ensure the city can continue to conduct the city's business in a manner that allows all residents to participate, we are modifying our public-comment procedures now through December. We will reevaluate our procedures in January 2024."

But such a change in how people are allowed to comment has raised concerns of possible censorship and limiting public participation.

"Everyone is entitled to their opinions, good or bad, regardless of our own personal views, biases or prejudices," Redwood City resident Cary Bloomquist said in an email to the city. "It's truly discouraging to read, via email, our rights (as) taxpaying citizens are being infringed upon via censorship of messages received on a public platform. All messages should be heard and shared when presented in a public forum. Anything else is discriminative

and repressive by definition."

Addressing the Redwood City council face-to-face during Monday's meeting, resident Rona Gundrum argued that the change in commenting procedure puts an undue burden on people by restricting how they can relay their views and the speed in which they can do it.

But another Redwood City resident applauded the city's decision to suspend Zoom comments. "Restricting real-time commenting is not free-speech suppression," Nick Chiochios said in his email to the city. "One only has to do it through proper channels."

The rights-advocacy group First Amendment Coalition pointed out on its website that it is critical to differentiate between what is indeed "unlawful and disruptive" and what could be protected speech.

The coalition noted that a public meeting using Zoom, for instance, can't exclude participants based on their viewpoint even if it comes in the form of heckling.

On its website, the freedom-rights organization American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) maintained that the First Amendment protects someone's right to express his or her opinion even though it may be unpopular.

However, the ACLU said, this right doesn't cover libel,

slander, obscenity or what's called a true threat, which is speech that intimidates someone or a group into believing serious bodily harm or death will occur.

The rash of the antisemitic and other bigoted views spewed on Zoom during municipal meetings lately appeared to have been timed around the major Jewish celebrations of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur last month.

Such cases, however, have been going on for a while across the country since local governments turned to video conferencing amid the pandemic to conduct public discourse safely and continued to provide that technology as another option for people to follow or participate in meetings.

In August, the anti-hate organization Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported a spike "in antisemitic speech and trolling efforts at public forums such as city council, county board and state house committee meetings."

Extremist groups are taking advantage of "the public comment portion of these events, especially those with the option to call in virtually, to push anti-semitic, white supremacist and anti-LGBTQ+ narratives," the ADL said. ■

Michelle Iracheta contributed to this report.

California's reservoirs at healthy levels after 'a miracle year' of rain and snow

State water officials optimistic about water supply heading into the new rainy season

By Kiley Russell/
Bay City News Service

California's water storage and delivery systems are in good shape heading into the rainy season, having benefited from last year's near-historic rain and snowfall totals, according to the state's top water managers.

Coming off three years of punishing drought conditions, last year was the sixth wettest on record and the Sierra Nevada snowpack stood at over 200% of its historic average in April — just the fourth time since 1950 that's happened, according to data from the California Department of Water Resources.

"Big picture, this was as close to a miracle year as you can get after following just the intensity of drought conditions," DWR Director Karla Nemeth said during a news briefing Tuesday, Oct. 3.

The 2023 "water year" — October 2022 through September 2023 — was so bountiful that for the first time since 2006, the State Water Project delivered 100% of water allocations to the 29 public water agencies and 750,000 acres of farmland it serves in the Bay Area, Central Valley, Northern California and the Central Coast.

California's other massive water storage and delivery network, the federally operated

Central Valley Project, was able to deliver 100% of water allocations for the first time since 2017 and has about 8.17 million acre feet left in the reservoirs it manages, which is more than twice as much water as it had at the same time last year.

"This impressive turnaround has put us in a much better position this season in case we see a return to dry conditions," said Ted Craddock, deputy director of the State Water Project.

"And we'll also be in a position to capture as much water as possible in the event we have a wet season like we saw last year, as well, while still providing flood control protection to downstream communities

and meeting environmental and water delivery needs," Craddock said.

In addition to providing healthy water delivery volumes, the wet winter allowed state and local planners to divert nearly 391,000 acre-feet of flood water into groundwater aquifers and state agencies to issue permits for an additional 1.2 million acre-feet of water to be used for groundwater recharge, although it's unclear how much of that actually made it in to local aquifers.

While an El Nino meteorological pattern appears to be shaping up heading into the fall, there are still too many variables to tell for certain if it will produce a

wetter than normal year, as such systems can often do.

"While we are pleased to start the 2024 water year with reserves, we know firsthand that California's changing climate is unpredictable and dry years will undoubtedly reoccur," said Ernest Conant, regional director of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which runs the Central Valley Project. ■

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SCAM

continued from page 8

victims, scammers might send an email or a letter on what appears to be official U.S. government letterhead to make the scam look legitimate.

Scammers will continue to emphasize the victim's funds are "unsafe" and they must be moved to a new "alias" account for safeguarding, the FBI said.

Some victims have reportedly lost their entire life savings to this scam, according to the FBI.

"These scammers are cold and calculated. They are targeting older members of our community who are particularly mindful of potential risks to their nest

eggs. The criminals are using the victims' own attentiveness against them," FBI Special Agent in Charge Robert Tripp said in a statement. "By educating the public about this alarming new scam, we hope to get ahead of these scammers and prevent any further victimization."

The FBI advises the public not to click on unsolicited pop-ups, links sent via text messages, or email links or attachments. Federal agents also urge the public not to reach out to the phone number provided in a pop-up, text, or email, and to avoid downloading software that an unknown individual instructed.

The public are also warned against letting unknown

individuals take control of their computer. U.S. government representatives will never ask anyone to send money to them via wire transfer, cryptocurrency, or gift cards, the FBI emphasized.

Those who have relevant information on fraudulent or suspicious activities can report them to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at ic3.gov. They must give information such as the name of the person or company that contacted them; methods of communication used, including websites, emails, and telephone numbers; and bank account number where the funds were wired to and the recipient's name or names. ■

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Meeting ID: 860 6847 2736

Weblink: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86068472736>

Remote Public Comments:
Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. Members of the public participating remotely may comment on items during the hearing.

Email: sharper@woodsidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

2. 243 Highland Terrace VARI2023-0001

Kyle Tran, Kreative Touch Design Development Planner: Melanie Olson, Associate Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal to construct a new Accessory Dwelling Unit located as close as 4 feet to the side and rear property lines as permitted by State law. The project requires approval of a Variance to height limits for the ADU to have plate heights exceeding the 11-foot plate height maximum and 17-foot overall height maximum allowed for accessory structures (VARI2023-0001).

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15303(a), which includes a second dwelling unit in a residential zone.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING MELAINE OLSON AT MOLSON@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685

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A. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	9,500	9,500
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B1. Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions	53	58
B2. In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions	5,493	5,503
B3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid or Requested Distribution Outside USPS	888	888
B4. Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS	0	0
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D1. Outside County Nonrequested Copies	0	0
D2. In-County Nonrequested Copies	0	0
D3. Nonrequested Copies Distributed Through the USPS by Other Classes of Mail	0	0
D4. Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail	1,965	1,954
E. Total Nonrequested Distribution	1,965	1,954
F. Total Distribution	8,399	8,403
G. Copies not Distributed	1,101	1,097
H. Total	9,500	9,500
I. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	76.60%	76.75%

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October 6, 2023 issue of this publication.
18. I certify that the information furnished on this form is true and complete. Nicholas Navarrete, Director of Finance and Operation, Embarcadero Media

Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Sea change

Visit an interactive underwater world, complete with messages in a bottle, in one of seven installations at the Code:ART digital art festival

BY HEATHER ZIMMERMAN

An alley off of Emerson Street in Palo Alto will soon be the site for what has to be, hands down, the Peninsula's most unusual intersection. There will be no gridlock, traffic lights, or even cars for that matter; instead, undulating sea creatures and secret messages in bottles will beckon passersby to come explore an undersea world.

It's not every day that you can wander through an ocean landscape in the heart of downtown Palo Alto, let alone interact with the sea creatures who live there. Such an unexpected experience is one of the inspirations behind artist Ruokan He's piece, titled "Intersection," which will be installed Oct. 12-14 at 536 Emerson St., during the city of Palo Alto's Code:ART digital art festival.

The piece is among the seven interactive works of art placed around downtown Palo Alto for the biennial art festival.

That unusual combination of the natural world with an urban landscape underlies the title and the concept of "Intersection," He said.

"It's based on this bit of memory about the ocean but also thinking of this idea of an intersection as a place where different streets and different areas cross each other. So what is it like when streets and oceans cross each other and (what) would that kind of experience be like? I want to create this environment where an ocean and an urban city come together and it's a new kind of interesting reality," He said.

"Intersection" is one of Code:ART's six "urban interventions" that will be installed in various spaces such as parking lots, alleys and storefronts throughout downtown. In addition, visitors can check out a major piece, "Questions for the Curious Orchard" by Los Angeles artist Nate Mohler that

will be installed in King Plaza in front of Palo Alto City Hall. All pieces offer visitors some way to interact.

He, who is based in Palo Alto, has worked extensively in games and virtual reality, creating "mixed reality" interactive pieces that bring together elements of the real and virtual worlds.

"Intersection" incorporates numerous illuminated fabric sculptures that resemble sea life. The sculptures resemble both ocean critters and plants, but aren't crafted to resemble specific species — it's up to the visitor's interpretation, He said.

Hanging among the forest of sculptures are a variety of bottles, patterned after the idea of a message in a bottle you might find on a beach, that offer up somewhat abstract messages in various forms to visitors, engaging them through different senses, including sound, touch and smell.

He is also a musician, who works primarily on the piano, with some use of a synthesizer.

In addition to all the visuals, sound will help set the scene in "Intersection," but more of a soundscape rather than a musical composition, she said.

"We'll be adding some more environmental sounds to make people feel more immersive in that space."

She said she was drawn to an ocean theme for the piece because of her own experiences at the beach, which also makes her want to learn more about the creatures and plants that call the ocean home.

"I really feel connected to nature when I see the different ocean life and also I really enjoy foraging near the Pacific coast," He said.

The artist aims for visitors to bring their own experiences, including perhaps their own memories of the ocean, to their time exploring "Intersection."

"People can walk through and create their own path, exploring these different interactive models, and so people are part of the art. So we are creating art together when they walk inside



Courtesy Ruokan He

"Intersection" features fabric sculptures that resemble sea animals and plants, though what kinds of sealife exactly is up to visitors' own interpretations.

— like connecting these different dots. They have their own stories after they walk through and maybe that evokes their own memories about their time at the ocean," she said.

Visitors to "Intersection" can also venture right next door to Bell's Books, which is one of several downtown merchants and galleries that the city has partnered with to host exhibitions that complement the festival.

The aim, said Elise De Marzo, public art program director for the city of Palo Alto, was to invite Code:ART guests to also visit downtown's many merchants.

"We are really fortunate to have such support for creative outlets and artists. So we really wanted to help highlight that as well," she said.

Coordinating with the festival, each business curated their own show.

Bell's will host a show of photographs by Margo Davis of groundbreaking figures such as Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Toni Morrison, Ursula Le Guin and the Dalai Lama. Bell's will host a reception to meet Davis on Oct. 13, 4-8 p.m.

Pamela Walsh Gallery will feature a new digital piece and photographs by interdisciplinary artist Maja Planinac. Visitors can meet the artist Oct. 12, 6-8 p.m. Qualia Gallery hosts a free program on Oct. 13, at 7:30 p.m. with local artist Clive McCarthy, who demonstrates his use of small, custom-built computer systems in creating painting-like images.

Visitors to Code:ART can check out the festival sites in any order they'd like, but for those looking for a more structured experience, the city's arts commissioners and art staff will lead several tours of the installations each evening of the festival at 6 and 8 p.m., with tours departing from in front of City Hall. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

Code:ART takes place Oct. 12-14 at various locations in downtown Palo Alto. Admission is free. Find more information about each installation and a map of where to find them at cityofpaloalto.org.



Courtesy Ruokan He

The piece includes messages in bottles that engage visitors' senses in various ways, including sound and touch.

Worth a Look



Courtesy Mitsuru Nishimura

Musician Hiromi brings her new project Sonicwonder to Stanford Live on Oct. 11.

Hiromi's Sonicwonder

Acclaimed jazz, pop and classical pianist/composer Hiromi Uehara (who performs under the name Hiromi) has been dazzling audiences with her virtuosic and improvisational skills for years, including at a gig at the opening ceremonies of the Tokyo Olympics. Originally from Japan, she moved to the U.S. in 1999, studying at the prestigious Berklee College of Music, and, with her critically acclaimed 2003 debut album "Another Mind," became a force to be reckoned with on the international jazz scene. Her groovy electrified quartet Hiromi's Sonicwonder, in which she's joined by trumpet player Adam O'Farrill, bassist Hadrien Feraud and drummer Gene Coyle, will perform at Stanford Oct. 11. The concert comes hot on the heels of the release of Hiromi's new record, "Sonicwonderland," described on her website as her "heaviest, funkiest album yet."

Oct. 11, 7:30 p.m., at Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets are \$32. live.stanford.edu.

Oliver Jeffers

Bestselling author and artist Oliver Jeffers comes to Kepler's to mark the release of his new illustrated book "Begin Again: The Story of How We Got Here and Where We Might Go," which, according to Kepler's, shares a history of humanity and ponders where it might go in the future. Jeffers, who was raised in Belfast, Northern Ireland, is perhaps best known as the illustrator of the children's books "The Day The Crayons Quit" and "The Day The Crayons Came Home" (written by Drew Daywalt), but he's also published "How to Catch a Star," "Lost and Found," "Here We Are," and "Once Upon an Alphabet," among others. At Kepler's, he'll offer a presentation, take part in a moderated Q&A and sign books.

Oct. 6, 6 p.m., Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real #100, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$35 and include a copy of "Begin Again." keplers.org.

FabMo Artisans Market

Rejoice, FabMo fans! After a three-year hiatus, the FabMo Artisans Market is happening again, offering eco-friendly, handcrafted creations from local makers, including everything from pet bandanas to jewelry to one-of-a-kind paper goods and home decor. To be included in the sale, at least 30% of materials used in each item must have been sourced from FabMo. FabMo is a long-running volunteer organization that collects unused designer samples (think

wallpaper, carpet, textiles and more) and offers them for sale to be repurposed into treasure rather than trashed. Who knows, you may find a great gift — or get inspired to try making something yourself.

Oct. 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Los Altos Community Center, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. fabmo.org.

Dan Bern

Longtime indie-folk-rock favorite Dan Bern returns to Palo Alto for another concert presented by Earthwise Productions. Listeners can look forward to his engaging performance style and trademark mix of intelligent, sometimes humorous songs, covering topics including politics and baseball (we defy any San Francisco Giants fan to listen to "The Sun Shines on McCovey Cove" without tearing up a little). In addition to his many original albums, featuring masterpieces such as "Jerusalem" and "After the Parade," Bern has also contributed songs to films including "Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story" and "Get Him To The Greek," and the children's TV program "The Stinky and Dirty Show," among many other projects. According to the event listing and Bern's website, he'll feature two new songs commissioned by Earthwise especially for the occasion, including one inspired by a Wallace Stegner short story. Bay Area musician Jerry Hannan opens the show.

Oct. 8, 8 p.m., at Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$17.69. eventbrite.com.

Public Notices

WELCOME MOVERS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295368
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) WELCOME MOVERS, located at 445 Madison Ave. Redwood City, CA 94061, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
SANTOS MARTINEZ
445 Madison Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061
JESUS GONZALEZ
445 Madison Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061

This business is conducted by: a General Partnership.

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/15/2023.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 15 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

THE TESS FOUNDATION
TESS RESEARCH FOUNDATION
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295438

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) The TESS Foundation, 2.) TESS Research Foundation, located at 430 Claremont Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Mailing Address: 655 Oak Grove Ave #53, Menlo Park, CA 94026.

Registered owner(s):
TREATMENTS FOR EPILEPSY AND SYMPTOMS OF SLC13A5 FOUNDATION
430 Claremont Way,
Menlo Park, CA 94025
CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/03/2015

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 25 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

MI TIERRA LINDA SUPERMERCADO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295277

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Mi Tierra Linda Supermercado, located at 1209 Willow Pass Rd. Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s):
QUALITY MARKET CORPORATION
1209 Willow Pass Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
California

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed

above on 04/06/2006

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 07 2023.
(ALM Sep 15, 22, 29 and Oct 6, 2023)

BAG TO BASICS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295413

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Bag to Basics, located at 46 Greenoaks Drive, Atherton, CA 94027.

Registered owner(s):
SAMIRA NAWAS

46 Greenoaks Drive, Atherton, CA 94027

This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/27/2006

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 22 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Case No.: 23-CIV-03999

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Chrispus Alexander Easley filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

CHRISPUX ALEXANDER EASLEY to JACE ALEXANDER WILLIAMS

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/24/2023, 9:00 a.m., Southern Branch: Hall of Justice and Records of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:

ALMANAC
Date: 08/30/2023
Lee, Elizabeth K
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 15, 22, 29 and Oct 6, 2)

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Food & Drink

Bowled over

Seven standout spots to slurp a steaming bowl of ramen this fall

By Christine Lee and Ashley Wang

The Bay Area has long been ramen-obsessed. Of all the region's culinary trends and foodie fanaticism, nothing seems to spark longer wait lists and eater-on-a-mission car rides than those steaming hot bowls of noodles in exquisitely rendered broth.

Though local diners' love of ramen knows no season, with fall in the air and chillier weather afoot, we revisited and updated this list of standout ramen spots originally published by our sister publication, The Six Fifty.

Ramen Dojo

If you live in the Bay Area and/or love ramen (and chances of the latter increase with the former), you've most likely heard of Ramen Dojo in San Mateo and its long lines. It's one of the most well-known ramen shops on this list, with diners driving in from San Francisco, San Leandro and all over the Bay Area for the restaurant's rich flavorful broth.

Their ramen comes in pork, garlic pork, pork miso and garlic miso pork soup base options. It's topped abundantly with two pieces of pork, shredded chicken, fried whole garlic, kikurage mushroom, chives and — love it or hate it — quail egg, instead of the more common soft-boiled egg. Yes, it's a slightly innovative take on traditional ramen and makes for a colorful, vibrant, carefully curated dish.



Courtesy Yelp

Toppings on Ramen Dojo's garlic pork ramen include slices of pork and a quail egg.



Above: Ramen Seas serves ramen in a light, savory broth full of rich shellfish flavor and topped with plenty of seafood. Courtesy Ramen Seas website. Top: For Ramen Nagi's black king ramen, blackened garlic and calamari ink are added to the traditional tonkotsu broth and a ball of minced pork flavored with black sesame and spices tops the soup. Photo by Magali Gauthier

The Banbanji ramen, with a sesame pork broth, comes with the standard toppings, minus the pork. And for a vegetarian option, there's the creamy corn ramen.

Ramen Dojo's noodles are on the thicker side and cooked al-dente, which helps balance out the strong flavor of the broth. Chashu slices are generous, juicy and perfectly smoked, with a simple flavor.

Be careful when you're selecting the spice level — here, the extra spicy is actually extra spicy, and you might get a kick you weren't expecting. *Ramen Dojo, 805 S. B St., San Mateo; 650-401-6568. ramendojo-sanmateo.com.*

Ramen Nagi

If you're looking for a quick, no-wait ramen stop, Ramen Nagi might not be your best bet. Since its opening, the restaurant has drawn epic interest and round-the-clock lines that reflect its game-changing role in the Palo Alto ramen scene. In fact, this location is the Tokyo-based chain's first-ever venture into the U.S. market, and their ramen is living up to the hype.

Customers can choose from four broths, dubbed "kings": original (tonkotsu), black (squid ink), red (red miso and red chili paste) and green (with basil, parmesan and olive oil). Each bowl starts with the tonkotsu as its base. The pork broth is cooked for more than 20 hours.

Also notable is Ramen Nagi's vegetarian ramen — the broth is

made from cauliflower, onions, milk and garlic.

Ramen Nagi, 541 Bryant St., Palo Alto; ramennagiusa.com.

Hokkaido Ramen Santouka

A cute little stand located inside San Jose's Mitsuwa Marketplace, Hokkaido Ramen Santouka is your classic, international ramen chain staple. But don't brush off this location for being another bland food court disaster just yet: The spicy miso and shiso ramens boast perfectly seasoned broths and the most tender, melt-in-your-mouth chashu. Plus you can't miss out on dessert.

Hokkaido Ramen Santouka, 675 Saratoga Ave., San Jose; 408-446-1101. santouka.co.jp.

Ramen Parlor

If you're into seafood like us, then you may want to set your sights on Ramen Parlor, whose famous lobster garlic ramen is always worth the trip and something you won't find anywhere else in the area. It comes loaded with soft shell crab, spinach and quail egg. The broth is bold and the lobster creates a deeper, saltier flavor. Other seafaring bowls include the crab spicy miso ramen and shrimp curry ramen.

Not into seafood? There are plenty of other options. You can choose from three ramen categories — classic, parlor and house specialty — each of which offers different ramen broths (pork, miso, garlic, soy sauce). *Ramen Parlor, 901 S. B St., San Mateo; 650-344-9728. ramenparlor-sanmateo.com.*

Ramen Izakaya Yu-Gen

With a great interior and lively atmosphere, Yu-Gen has been a key location in the Peninsula's ramen scene outside of San Mateo for a while now. The restaurant's tonkotsu "deluxe" ramen is a local mainstay and worth coming back for again and again. There's also a chicken paitan ramen, served with a five-spice quarter chicken, as well as a mixed vegetable ramen for non-carnivores. Delve into Yu-Gen's menu

for pre-ramen eats, such as the takoyaki (octopus dumpling balls) and chicken karaage, and round out the meal with one of the many sake options.

Ramen Izakaya Yu-Gen, 152 Castro St., Mountain View; 650-428-0888. yugen-us.com.

Himawari-Tei

At first glance, Himawari might resemble a jazz bar more than a ramen restaurant: Vinyl record covers line the walls, with high stools and sophisticated industrial lights making for a great place to catch up with friends over ramen and beer.

The line isn't too bad as long as you avoid peak hours. The menu is a long list of familiar dishes: soy ramen, shio ramen, miso ramen and deluxe ramen, plus appetizers such as agedashi tofu, gyoza and edamame. Himawari's light broth and time-tested favorites satisfy both ramen fanatics and newbies.

Don't forget to order the massive, crispy-on-the-outside, tender-in-the-inside chicken karaage. *Himawari-Tei, 202 2nd Ave., San Mateo; 650-375-1005.*

Ramen Seas

Unlike tonkotsu or even shoyu, seafood ramen can be a rather hit or miss affair on the Peninsula. But fear not — for seafood ramen that is both delicious and dependable, we point you to Ramen Seas.

The Sunnyvale restaurant's main seafood broth — the defining factor of good ramen — is light, savory and full of rich shellfish flavor. Other options include clam (our favorite) and miso-clam ramen.

For something more unconventional (and vegan!), check out the ramen salad. *Ramen Seas, 173 S. Murphy Ave., Sunnyvale; 408-481-0900. ramenseassunnyvale.com. ■*

— Additional reporting by Heather Zimmerman

Email the Peninsula Foodist at peninsulafoodist@almanacnews.com.

WE'RE PROUD TO BRING OUR READERS SOME OF THE BEST JOURNALISM IN THE STATE.

The annual **California Journalism Awards** competition, which celebrates excellence in reporting, design, photography and multimedia recognized our Peninsula team with **17 awards** in the following categories:

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- Coverage of 2022 Elections
- Coverage of Business and the Economy
- Coverage of Youth and Education
- Editorial Comment
- Feature Photo
- Feature Story
- In-Depth Reporting
- Inside Page Layout & Design
- Investigative Reporting
- Land-Use Reporting
- News Photo
- Newsletter
- Open - Investigative Reporting
- Profile Story
- Video Journalism

HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THE JUDGES OF THE
2022 CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM AWARDS ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR WORK —

An inquiry into the accidental death of an electrical worker, finding significant culpability on the part of Palo Alto. The level of well-documented detail was exceptional, especially given the lack of cooperation from a range of rejected sources. Meticulous work.

— First Place, Investigative Reporting

Comprehensive. Balanced and readable article that fully explains, with well-chosen quotes, the reasons for the city's and the business owners' views on a development of interest to residents.

— Second Place,
Coverage of Business
and The Economy

Great story, well told. This piece had RHNA numbers explained, NIMBYism on parade, attorneys and former elected official behaving badly — just great work.

— First Place, Coverage of Local Government

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The **Almanac**

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